
Lycra Louts and Cycle Stop Lines



Following calls to introduce camera enforcement of cycle advanced stop lines, which would result in potentially enormous numbers of extra fines on motorists, it is worth reading a report recently published by TRL. This is report PPR240 commissioned for Transport for London on the behaviour of cyclists and motorists at junctions where there is a reserved space for cyclists.

The report shows that although there appeared to be some encroachment by motorists in 36% of events studied by the authors of the report, there were no obvious safety problems as a result (the photograph above shows a typical “encroachment” as covered by the report). In fact the report says that most such encroachments were only partial and “*this indicates a degree of restraint in encroaching upon the cyclist’s space*”. It also reports that the presence of such “advance safety lines” (ASLs) resulted in much lower infringement of the pedestrian crossing area at junctions.

The new regulations are proposed in a Bill called the “London Local Authorities and Transport for London Bill 2007” that is being put before Parliament soon. The ABD’s submission on this Bill to TfL is present on the internet at: www.freedomfordrivers.org/ASL_Consultation.pdf

(Editor’s Comments: It would seem to me that motorists have to cope with a very complex problem in this area.. They are permitted to cross into the ASL when traffic lights are green, but as soon as they change to red they must stop, or risk breaking the law by crossing the red light. They therefore logically have to halt sometimes partially in the ASL area. Such accidental infringement of the ASL should not be penalised and in fact is not an offence so far as I understand the law so there could be numerous false penalty notices or ones that will fail for lack of suitable evidence. The fact that such a complex law, which few people understand, is likely to be enforced in future just shows how many modern motoring laws are unjust and inequitable)

Lycra Louts Regularly Break the Law



The most interesting aspect of this report is however is the fact that it shows how frequently cyclists cross traffic lights set at red (examples above and below were photographed near Tower Hill and numerous examples were seen in just a few minutes). In fact 17% of cyclists studied crossed on a red light at the ASL sites covered by this report. And this was 4% higher than at other traffic lights without ASLs which suggests that ASLs actually encourage such behaviour.



Rather than introducing more ASLs in the name of providing safer conditions for cyclists, perhaps their use should be re-examined or modifications considered to reduce these incidents?

(Editor: Note that 80% of the cyclists who broke the law and took part in this dangerous kind of behaviour were male, and one only has to stand at some of the junctions mentioned to see what kind of cyclists these are – hence the reference to “lycra louts” to describe a certain style of rider. The fact that almost no enforcement action is taken against this persistent law breaking, which is a clear road safety hazard, while motorists may be fined for technical breaches of inept laws that are impossible to comply with and where there is no obvious road safety issue, amply demonstrates how perverse justice has become in the motoring arena.)

R.W.Lawson, ABD 05/11/2007, www.freedomfordrivers.org